(181) 38 Via Ferrabosca (455)

Saturday
July 6 -

We have just come back from a 5 days motoring into the most astonishing country - I will write & tell you about it - but this is just to answer your letter which I found here on arrival - As far as I can make out from the 1923 packet is missing when you said I was 1933 (!) because there was a 1922 packet in the parcel sent by the Jebbs. I thought it was because I had put it in with later ones. I thought the packet I gave yourself included all years up to 1923 with possibly one packet dated 1922. I then sent the Neal (or Ely) 1922 packet by the Jebbs. Together with 1924 etc up to 1934 - I may be wrong, but if this is so the 1923 packet should have been in your parcel, but is there - Are you sure it isn't? I have sent it to her. I enclose there (kept a list of exactly what I sent in each, but all I know is that the ones were in consecutive order with the

acceptin of the 1922 packet which
Perhaps you haven't yet looked in your packet
But nothing could have left out of your personality
So if it isn't there it should have been in the
Jebb packet. I'm afraid I'm a great fool
but it seemed so simple for them to
take a parcel in their car - I can't think
why they didn't. It's terribly difficult
to send anything by parcel post here & very
expensive. W & C would have sent it
myself. Well. I suppose it won't matter
very much but I can't conceive why anyone
should abstract one packet of letters which
can have no interest or value.

We are hot & dirty & mosquito & fly
eaten. but we have seen (though crowding
of incredible & exciting beauty & people
equally astonishing - Perhaps I shall write you
a real travel letter. Still I daresay you
right & England is quite as beautiful
& more poetical. & certainly less obscene.

I am rather relieved that my D.H. sketches
are approved of. So I shall be able occupy
myself for all my travels

Yours VB.

(1937)

8, Fitzroy Street,
W.1.
Museum 5596.

May 16

I should have liked to write to you in any case to tell you that the most heavenly asparagus arrived today with a bunch of tulips. Today worthy of your first letter with its welcome though undeserved praises. I am writing in most unpropitious circumstances. Waiting for Duncan to bring his mother, possibly Aunt Daisy, possibly Miss Elmes to tea. After doing them to see decorations in the City. Angelica is doing her best to collect oddments of jam/tea various pots sufficient to make me seem respectable for full. I have managed to make a cake & some scones, since we had nothing in the larder & today is Sunday. Tomorrow too is Whit Monday & altogether we feel these feasts will never cease — London is absolutely vile. Its generally pitch dark & icy cold. I have had to light my stove again after letting it out I hoped for the summer.

I have only to tell you at first-hand of the coronation - At Charleston it was a fairly dismal day, keeping train in the morning & sun or rain or less all day - It was even too wet at night to see any bonfires - nor did they have one on Firle Beacon. I spent my day much as usual painting in the morning. Anybody who was to have arrived at Newhaven in the afternoon didn't turn up - one had sent a telegram to say she wasn't coming till the next day but owing to the breakdown of all arrangements in England we didn't get it. She is here now, having had a wonderful time in France it seems.

Duncan is going to Paris on Wednesday & then may go on to La Rochelle or some such place for 2 or 3 weeks or stay & paint in or near Paris - I shall go with him but only for 3 or 4 days just to have a sight of Paris. Perhaps it's rather dotty to go for such a short time - but it will be rather nice to get a moment away from family life.

I was interrupted by the tea party which didn't include Miss Elves Hocking

I have now, late at night, just been rung up by Julian from Cambridge

8, Fitzroy Street,
W.1.

Museum 5596.

He rang up with all arrangements of his own but also told me that Maynard seems to be rather seriously ill - He seems to have got much worse with the same disease, during the last few days & is now in it. Julian said she moved to a hospital - But they hope to do so soon though it will then mean a long & serious illness at best - I must try & find out more tomorrow as it was difficult on the telephone. Julian had seen Lydia who seemed to be very much upset.

Duncan went to the Abbey & had many amusing stories to tell which you had better get from him direct some day. He saw it all perfectly & seems to have managed better than most people, getting away fairly early afterwards, while the peers were kept waiting hours for their carriages. & some had to stay till about 6 p.m. The funniest moment must have been when he joined the cavalcade going to the Abbey, driving the Baby, which was in a very grubby state, dressed in his court clothes,

while the Dukes & Duchesses in their Robes with their chamberlains looked at him with astonishment & scorn — But the public were kind & he got in easily in the end. We tried to go & look at flood lighting one night, but cars weren't allowed to go any where near. The only tolerable view we could get was from the river side of the river which is always lovely & wasn't very much better than usual. One could have walked, but the different places are so far apart. London is still chaotic High barriers & stands are coming down. No buses yet of course. According to Helen the boys went to see the procession starting at 2 PM & got good places quite easily & saw perfectly. They said the crowd wasn't nearly so large as for the Jubilee & so enthusiastic. Your Mabel also seems to have seen perfectly.

As for my show I expect nothing has happened since the first 2 or 3 days when I had sold 6. Nobody much can happen with Christmas so near. I think I have so far made about £50 profit after paying commissions & frames —

Let me know your plans

We all admit that English asparagus is better than French!

Yours

(183)

[17 Sept. 1937]

Charleston

Friday

I should have written yesterday but I half thought you might come – & besides what the good of scolding you every time when it has no effect & you continue to shower benefactions regardless? I've read [illegible] your morning letter. It's angelic of you to come tomorrow when I fear I've let everyone in for [illegible] women whom I now [illegible] young rather wish I hadn't asked. Well this the last of our visitors I hope except possibly Angus who may have time but who can be to come soon completely disregarded.

I have begun to do a little painting so I'm not as much in need of tools as I was. In fact there's really no reason I shouldn't return to ordinary life. it would be more sensible & I believe

Yours VB

(182) 5 (1937)

Charleston

Sep 5

What a life you lead - as usual. Please don't exhaust yourself by coming here if it's too difficult - I really need not be visited like an invalid now - There's no reason but sheer laziness why I should not go out & about & I give myself about the country. Clive & Kitty L. arrive tomorrow, I say don't know when as they're driving from Dover. I hope it won't be too late after tea - I fear life will be less simple after they come but me has had a long time of case.

I wish the Question & Answer on the Day Lewis essay - we might have more copies typed I think - (Don't I owe you money for typing?) I'm glad you think the Morgan one good - I think we must try. Charleston party because we must try. I know Julian wanted all three; essays published together & I suppose it makes them might do (sic) Angelica me must try. Of course I feel more strongly than he does that its always better if we can avoid the effect of its

keep a family affair - but perhaps I'm wrong. Anyhow if Bunny will write something we must see what he says.

I don't think I can paint portraits at present - it needs a special kind of effort which I don't think I'm capable of - Sketching Angelica is different as she's not sitting specially to me - But I couldn't settle down to paint Clive, or anyone, seriously as a matter of business at present. I'm only working at small things which matter to no one but myself

flattered though I know it's foolish I know, but I can't help it.

Adrian is coming I believe the week end after next - 2 August some day next week - so we have solitude. Yours VB

Fortescue. Dec 22. 1937

I suppose unless I write I shant ever hear anything of what is happening in poor benighted England. Here we are in such an incredibly remote & different world that we can hardly believe its all going on - So unless you want me to give up all belief in its existence do write & tell me about Christmas & the frost & measles & disease & all such unlikely things. Are they still there & are you in the midst of them? How incredibly foolish of us all not to come here every year. Christmas skips off one like a party cloak & its brilliant daylight existence of black velvet sky. Its very cold of course but we can take steps against that. Our steps are taken in huge lamb wool boots which make all the difference between life & death. We have wood fires which are very pleasant through our long hot. We I think we're going to have our own Berçie stoves installed. We live an almost completely separate existence in a flat of our own with our own sitting room where we have all meals except dinner. Above

Our sitting room in the tower is another room which I think we can make into a studio when Quentin comes. At present Angelica & I have been very lazy & for the most part sitting over the fire & thanking heaven we escaped. We had what I thought a rather appalling journey out. It was very crowded owing to the incompetence of the Waytarers who were given seats in the wrong part of the train at Calais & [illegible] in the wrong train at Paris. With the result that we had a terrible business changing with our porters & the heat & all our luggage went to London, where we had to retrieve it the day we arrived. Also cockroaches are rather a hazard. being only let back boards with no coverings & only [illegible] called a pillow. We had to spend the night cooped up with a French couple in stifling heat. However, owing largely to our munificence we had very good meals & found ourselves here in brilliant sunshine more the worse for our adventures. It all seems very familiar though they say it's 6 years since we have been here. Now our tenant at the Bastide is giving it up, her master the Duke having died - so if we

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wanted to we could have it again. I think
there enough furniture left to make it quite
habitable. But I don't know if we would
really ever be able to come here enough to
make it worth while - Anyhow we need
not decide now. I must say I think in
some ways its a great relief to be away
even more than we can at Charleston -
to have no School. & Painting classes at
one's door & to know that one has
practically vanished as far as most people
are concerned. Also there's something in the
atmosphere that takes away any sense of
responsibility one may have in England - One
becomes purely animal & lives only in the
senses, all too easily. But what a relief
it is. at least - & one only a painter
Quentin's coming on Friday & will stay I hope
almost a week. Perhaps even he will lose
his morals here & forget about educating the
masses & bring back to Leslie. All the same
I can't help wondering if you have seen or heard
anything of Helen when I felt I left it a
deplorable state after that awful party.
I expect she will have collapsed. She seemed to me
on the verge of it & I have a slight feeling of
guilt. but - like me really can't help her philanthropies

Also shall you see the Keyneses at all? I imagine you will retreat also into a family life in Rodmell but you must avoid the Keyneses & I feel sure you will have all sorts of festivities. Be a good creature & let me abuse them & add to my sense of escape here.

Duncan & Helen & Ly are in Paris with his mother. Aunt Daisy has made herself thoroughly disliked here which annoyed us. She never stopped asking the Colonel to do things for her until he became rude - to be rude - & Helen at dappers drawn but luckily at a distance. Very few of the old Cassidians are still here. Mr Coates, his wife having died & his daughters married, lives alone in the same house & plays golf & for a drink. Roth the incredibly plain American painter, deserted by his wife who went off with a Sapph. does the same. No other English remain or hardly any. & we see some of them we sit in our tower & listen & cars coming & going but never descend till they've all gone.

How is Leonard? Tell him his gloves were a great comfort to me & will be invaluable driving here. All the same it was wicked to give them & may lead to trouble.

Love VW

T. PARSONS 3-2-73